



# Education Watch

Enhancing Flexibility & Accountability ■ Leaving No Child Behind

U.S. House Education & the Workforce Committee ■ John Boehner, Chairman  
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<http://edworkforce.house.gov/edwatch>

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## Reading Achievement Gap Continues To Grow

Reading scores in most states have remained flat over the past eight years, and the reading achievement gap between white students and black or Hispanic students has widened further. These results come from a state-by-state analysis of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) over the last seven years by the National Education Goals Panel.

According to the panel's report, only two states, Georgia and Massachusetts, reduced the gap between white students and black or Hispanic students. On average, whites scored 33 points ahead of blacks and 29 points ahead of Hispanics. (Generally speaking, 10 points equals what a student learned in one grade.)

Within ethnic groups, the achievement gap between the best and worst readers has also widened. For example, as reported in the *Wall Street Journal*, "the best-performing black children scored 99 points better than the worst-performing blacks," compared to an 86-point difference roughly eight years ago.

These disappointing results are yet more evidence that simply spending more money on education does not improve student achievement. President Bush has a comprehensive plan to eliminate the reading deficit and focus federal resources on proven methods of success. We need to enact his Reading First initiative, and soon.

### Message of the Day

**Money alone cannot increase student achievement. States and schools using federal dollars must be held accountable for results.**

- ❑ *We must demand more from our schools while providing the resources necessary to dramatically energize efforts to eliminate the reading deficit.*
- ❑ *The No Child Left Behind bill invests \$5 billion over five years to ensure that every child can read by the third grade while demanding new accountability for results.*
- ❑ *H.R. 1 focuses on effective, proven methods of reading instruction based on scientific research.*

### DAILY EDUCATION FACTS

- NAEP revealed that 63 percent of black fourth graders, 58 percent of Hispanics, 60 percent of children in poverty, and 47 percent of children in urban schools scored at "below basic" reading competency levels.
- Title I programs for disadvantaged students received more than \$80 billion during the 1990s -- but reading scores for fourth graders have not budged.
- No state reduced the reading achievement gap between white students and black or Hispanic students in the eight grade between 1992 and 1998.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

*"If we have significant numbers of kids who can't read in the fourth grade, we're going to face some significant long-term problems."* **John W. Barth**, senior education associate, National Education Goals Panel, April 9, 2001